

Lincoln

By EDWIN HAMLIN CARR

Born.
A pioneer's life.
The nation's hero, in the nation's strife.

Wonderful eyes,
Loving, sad, wise;
Large hands, for caress
To helplessness;
A man playing a man's part,
Planting roses in your heart;
A high-class man,
Strong, slender, fit,
Like the rails he split.

Dead?
In the next world's strife
Leave a wide margin in the Book of Life.

TUCKAHOE, N. Y.

Little Abe Lincoln at Church

By WILLIAM E. BARTON

Author of "The Soul of Abraham Lincoln"

UNTIL he had become a man, and visited Vandalia as a representative in the Legislature of Illinois, Abraham Lincoln had never lived or even tarried long in a community having a place of worship owned and exclusively used by a single denomination. This fact has been stated many times, and from it very wide conclusions have been reached. One eminent New York author has stated in his book that the first public prayers which Abraham Lincoln ever heard were those offered above the grave of his mother, when Abraham was a lad in Indiana.

I was not among those present, but I have as vivid a mental picture of it as if I had been there, when Abraham Lincoln first went to church. To all intents and purposes I was there, for I have been present at innumerable services in all essential particulars similar, and have witnessed the presence there of numerous young Lincolns. Moreover, I have examined with painstaking care the reminiscences published in the proceedings of county historical societies and those related at gatherings of old settlers in Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky, so that I know there is no opportunity for any large error in my mental picture of the scene.

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, and he did not go to church that month or the next; not because he was too young, but because the weather was unfavorable. And he may not have gone in April because the water was high. But in May, or at latest in June of 1809, Abraham Lincoln went to church.

Once a month a meeting was "norated" for a given Saturday and Sunday in each of the four "appointments" of the preacher, who held that as his regular day and the day of his denomination. Not till later was there any conflict with the Methodists, and that came because the Baptists (which you must pronounce Bap-tists) "rule by Saturdays" and the Methodists "rule by Sundays." Perhaps you do not know what that means? It means that in determining which is the "third Saturday and Sunday" the Baptists accept the third Sunday after the third Saturday, and the Methodists accept the third Sunday whether it has been preceded by three Saturdays or only two. Turn to your calendar for 1920, and you will see that February comes in on Sunday. For the Baptists, therefore, the third Saturday and Sunday are the twenty-first and twenty-second; while for the Methodists the third Saturday and Sunday are the fourteenth and fifteenth. It means little to you, perhaps, but to a great many congregations in the rural regions of the South it means that on every Sunday in the month of February, 1920, two conflicting appointments will have to be adjusted. The usual procedure is to "divide the time" and let both men preach, a method which is usually accompanied by mutual Christian courtesy, but which has been known to stir up some very interesting sectarian discussions.

No such question troubled the first public appearance of Abraham Lincoln. I almost wish it had. I could wish that at that very first public service he had heard a Lincoln-Douglas debate between an old-time Baptist and a shouting Methodist on the subject of Predestination or the possibility of falling

from grace. But Hodgenville was a Baptist settlement. Its original colonists, Hodgen and La Rue and the rest, were Baptists, and the original colony had among its number a Baptist preacher. He did not preach every Sunday in any one place; no community of this character looked for or desired any such overdose of preaching. He doubtless found in time four scattered appointments, and once a month preached in the log meeting house, which was also schoolhouse, nearest to his own home, which was also that nearest to the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln.

By June, certainly, both Thomas and Nancy Lincoln were more than ready to go to meeting. The Saturday service, held in the afternoon, they probably did not attend. It was three miles away, and was intended chiefly for members. Thomas Lincoln was not yet a church member, and Nancy had but lately come to live in that community and had not transferred her membership, if she had one. But on Sunday morning Thomas and Nancy got ready for meeting.

Before they started, one or two families of their neighbors from up the creek rode up and shouted "Hello!" Thomas Lincoln called off his dogs—doubt not that a man as poor as he had as many as three of them—and invited his neighbors to get down and wait till Nancy had the children ready. They declined to alight, but suggested that if there was a gourd at the spring they would stop for a drink, which they did. While this leisurely proceeding was under way Thomas was saddling both his horses, if at this stage he had two, and if he had only one, he saddled that one. Assuming that one horse was as many as he then owned, he rode that one around to a stump in front of the cabin and received little Sarah in his arms and seated her in front of him at the saddle bow. Nancy then vaulted lightly up behind him, with Abraham in her arms. They joined the little group at the spring, and with halts at the intervening homes, which were not many, and which lengthened the procession somewhat, they rode the three miles to the log meeting house.

There Nancy dismounted and went inside with the two children. Thomas hitched his horse by the bridle-rein to a swinging limb, preferably of a beech tree, which grows low and gives shade and stamping ground, and a place for a horse to fight flies undisturbed. This method of hitching not only gave freedom to the horses, it prevented their getting the reins under their feet, made it unlikely that they would break their fastenings by any sudden jerk, as often occurs when horses are tethered to posts; and if a horse broke loose, he seldom was frightened by his freedom, or inclined to stray away. Moreover, there were always some ungodly young men who came to meeting to see the girls home, and who did not go inside the meeting house, but sat out and watched the horses.

Nancy went inside, but Thomas remained outside with the men. He talked with them about "craps" and maybe watched the swapping of a horse. There was talk, too, of politics, and of all neighborhood matters.

After a time the preacher rode up and tethered his horse. Like his neighbors he was a farmer, and not much better educated than the rest of them. He could be distinguished from his neighbors as he rode because he had his saddlebags behind him. Except just before election, when a man with very fat saddlebags was more likely to be a candidate; and what those saddlebags contained I know, but will not tell. It was before the dry law went into effect.

The preacher shook hands with the nearer men and nodded to the others, and went inside. From his saddlebags he took his Bible and his hymn book and placed them on the rude table or pulpit whose other article of furniture was a water bucket with a gourd. He cleared his throat, took a deep drink of water, looked over the left side of the house where the women had filled most of the seats, and over the right side where as yet there were few men, and began:

"We are met hyur, at this time, on this the Lord's day, in this place app'inted for sech services, for the purpose, if our hyearts deceive us not, of worshiping to-wards God's holy temple. A-whilst a-many of our fellow-beings-ah! as good as us by nater, and fa-a-ar better by practice-ah! have out-stripped us in the narrer lane of life, and go-o-o-one to pe-ople the pa-a-ale nations of the dead-ah! And hit is meet upon this solemn occasion, my dear friends, and neighbors, and neighbors' children, that we should dror in the wanderings of our minds-ah! from the yarth and the perishing things of yarth-ah! and fix

them upon heaven, and immortal glory. Let us therefore sing the hymn (he pronounced with the vowel long), 'Children of the Heavenly King.' Sung to the use of long measure. I would thank some brother to pitch and carry the tune, and all the brethren and sisters join in."

Usually there was no brother who volunteered, and the preacher would have been disappointed if there had been. He himself had a stentorian voice, and the opening hymn served the purposes of a church bell and organ voluntary combined. No other person had a hymn book, and the preacher often had none. He announced the two lines:

Children of the heavenly King,
As ye journeye, sweetlye sing.

He pronounced the vowels long for the same reason that the paid church choir pronounces "wind," so that it rhymes with "mind." He considered that the proper way in singing. He led in the singing of these two lines, and then announced the next two, which, however, he chanted, keeping the key-note in mind, so that the congregation sang in tune—

Sing your Father's worthy praise,
Glorious in His works and ways.

The women joined him in their high, thin treble; one or two men attempted "to bass"; one old woman rose to a high falsetto tenor—but practically every one sang the air in unison. The tune runs in my mind as I write, and I could write the notes of it; but there are more quavers and variations in the singing than the notes would show. If you have heard it you know.

Thomas Lincoln and his companions now began to string in and take seats on the right side. The seats were slab puncheons without backs. The legs were driven through auger holes from below, and it was considered a needless concession to the flesh to saw them off flush with the slab above.

The sermon was long, beginning with Adam, and following the story of his sin with the account of the sins of the ages that intervened until Christ came, but with reminders also of the unmerited mercy of God, as shown in the ark of Noah at the time of the flood, in the journey through the wilderness and in the crossing of Jordan—what could the backwoods preacher have done without Jordan, which he pronounced Jurdin?—and then a lengthened argument drawn from Paul, with all the essential doctrines of a very rigid Calvinism, and the necessity of baptism by immersion. The sermon began calmly and grew louder, and then fell into a chant, the preacher holding his left hand on his ear, while he raced up and down in the pulpit space, gesticulating with his right hand, and telling what would occur to men who did not repent of their sins. And spitting. I will not write of the cultivated art of homiletic exhortation, but it was and is an art.

Even during this most exciting part of the sermon Thomas Lincoln may with entire propriety have walked to the pulpit and drank a gourd of water, or Nancy have nursed her baby when he grew fretful. Abraham Lincoln was not brought up by any rule of the book that babies were to be nursed once in three hours—they were nursed when they cried if their mothers had time to nurse them.

At the close of the meeting the preacher came in front of the pulpit and gave out a closing hymn. It may have been—

Our meetin' is most over,
And, brothers, we must part,
And if I never meet you more,
I love you in my heart,

or it may have been a cheerful anticipation of the place

Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths never end.

Whatever the hymn it was one that required no "lining." It was perhaps a "family song" in which the verses differed only in substitution for "brothers" in the first stanza the words "sisters," "mothers," "sinners," and so on in the succeeding verses. As they sang the people moved forward. First came the devout from the amen corner—the "praying brethering" being followed by the "agonizing sisters," and they shook the preacher by the hand. As they returned to their seats they shook hands with each other, until nearly every one shook hands with every one else. Nancy came with little Abraham in her arms, and the preacher shook her hand vigorously and kept on singing, and she moved back to her place, shaking

hands, with little Sarah clinging to her skirts, and Abraham wondering what all the noise was about.

Abraham Lincoln continued to go to church all through his babyhood and boyhood. You have heard that Nancy Lincoln's funeral sermon was not preached for several months after her death? That is true. And you understood that to mean that during all the intervening months there had been no preacher in the Pigeon Creek settlement?

That shows that you do not know very much about it—not more, for instance, than the average biographer of Lincoln.

But the funeral of Abraham Lincoln's mother is another story.
OAK PARK, ILLINOIS.



WUHU GENERAL HOSPITAL, CHINA

Where new buildings are being erected with Centenary help

The Hand of Healing Around the World

What the Centenary Is Doing for Medical Missions

By DR. J. G. VAUGHAN

Superintendent Medical Department, Board of Foreign Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church

THE steamers which ply up the Yangtze River are really commodious and even luxurious. In these days of acceleration of travel to the Orient, many an American traveler is enjoying the unusual sights of interior China as he paces the spacious deck of one of the great English river steamers.

On such a steamer, in 1909, I went to Wuhu, where the fine hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Hart gave us new recruits a resting place while we paused on our journey inland. One day Dr. Hart left his busy wards and operating room, in what is now known as the Wuhu General Hospital, and came to tell me that a boat was due, down the river, in a couple of hours. They had telegraphed ahead, informing the customs officials at Wuhu, that a passenger had been put off at the previous stop, probably suffering from bubonic plague.

Shaking Hands with the Bubonic Plague

In consequence the Wuhu officials refused to allow the boat to come to dock until their surgeon (our own Dr. Hart) should examine the passengers and pronounce them free from danger of spreading the plague. Dr. Hart asked me if I did not want to share the privilege (!?) of examining these passengers. With a feeling of anxiety (and I need not say timidity) I answered: "Sure, but how do you know plague when you see it?" "O!" he said, "you can tell it all right. The man will look sick." So with that preliminary schooling on the subject of bubonic plague, I went with him out to meet the great boat which presently swung around the bend of the river and came to anchor just off the hospital shore.

The work of examination, under the skillful and experienced management of Dr. Hart, was quickly done. No evidence of the plague was found, and under Dr. Hart's authorization the captain was allowed to dock the boat and after a short stop continue the journey down the river to Shanghai.

So it was—the great arteries of commerce, bearing their burdens of freight and the very essence of human business, were being touched and in a sense regulated and at times controlled by a medical missionary. What light bearers and pioneers they are and have always been—way out on these frontiers of civilization! What a luxury to have in such a place well-manned hospitals and a skillful surgeon. What a friend that Wuhu Hospital is—as it stands on the hill like a lighthouse and a beacon of health to the travelers and to the seamen, to greet